

NEWS RELEASE

**INDIANA
WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**



For Immediate Release: Jan. 15, 2004
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Joseph E. Kernan, Governor
Alan D. Degner, Commissioner

Kernan Awards Training Grant to BP Whiting Refinery

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. –Today Gov. Joe Kernan announced that the Indiana Department of Workforce Development has awarded a \$99,600 Incumbent Worker Training grant to Whiting's BP Whiting Refinery to upgrade the skills of 12 employees.

Built in 1889, the Whiting Refinery is currently BP's second largest facility. Producing 16 million gallons of product a day, it operates 24 hours a day and employs approximately 1,200 workers. Using the state funding, the company will offer 12 apprenticeships through Merrillville's General Physics and Purdue University Calumet.

"This facility is an important part of not only Northwest Indiana's economy, but the entire nation's and this grant will help ensure its continued success," said Kernan. "It will allow these employees to gain skills and certification that can never be taken away from them. It will make them more marketable as individuals and it will help the refinery to become more competitive."

Approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, the four-year program will include classroom learning, laboratory experiments, demonstrations of the basic principles of instrumentation as well as training in safety and environmental procedures. Successful completion of the training will result in workers earning journey status, official certification and credited hours towards a possible degree in higher education from Purdue University.

"The BP Whiting Business Unit is very pleased that we are able to receive this grant from the state of Indiana," said BP Whiting Business Unit Leader Dennis Seith. "This grant shows the state's commitment to our business and to continued workforce development in Northwest Indiana. We are also pleased that we are able to become a partner with Purdue University Calumet who will be providing assistance with the apprenticeship training program at their location."

BP is matching the grant with an \$887,744 contribution toward the training and will also build three process control simulators, which will be housed at Purdue University Calumet. Each simulator will have the capability to duplicate a variety of refinery processes and will be used as a part of the company's ongoing operation and mechanical crafts training efforts.

All Indiana businesses are eligible to apply for Incumbent Worker Training grants. The grants are designed to create a world-class workforce in Indiana, through continuous improvement to the skill levels of Hoosier workers.

Through its various programs and initiatives, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development is charged with continually improving the Hoosier workforce by assisting companies create new jobs and improve employee skills. The agency offers a variety of training and educational grants, works with the state's 27 WorkOne Centers, administers the unemployment insurance system, provides labor market information, assists employers with preparing workers for layoffs and closures and operates the a statewide job placement service.

For more information on this or other Workforce Development programs, contact Jeff Harris at 317/ 232-3396 or visit the web site at www.workforce.IN.gov.

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